

Will the broadcast flag interfere with consumers ability to make copies of DTV content for their personal use, either on personal video recorders or removable media?

I understand that proponents of the flag have "asserted" that it will not interfere with a consumer's ability to make copies of content for personal use, but I want it guaranteed. And I would like a clear-cut definition of what constitutes legitimate copying. Recently it has seemed that those who are in favor of such broadcast flags have narrowed their definition of "legitimate" copying to nearly nothing. I want to know that I can make a copy of a show for my upstairs media player without any threat of a media corporation trying to tell me that what I'm doing is not legal. I would also like "interfere" to be made clear. What constitutes interference? I don't want to have to make phone calls, fill out forms, and explain myself to someone else if I want to make a backup copy of something.

Would the digital flag interfere with consumers ability to send DTV content across networks, such as home digital networks connecting digital set top boxes, digital recorders, digital servers and digital display devices?

I am a computer and electronics enthusiast. I love to tinker and network and program. I have an ever evolving electronic network in my home. If I want to use my network to move my time-shifted copy of the West Wing from a digital video recorder downstairs, across my network, to a dvr upstairs, will I still be able to this quickly and easily with a broadcast flag? If this flag is to be implemented, I want guarantees that it will continue to work as seamlessly as my current set up.

Would the broadcast flag requirement limit consumers ability to use their existing electronic equipment (equipment not built to look for the flag) or make it difficult to use older components with new equipment that is compliant with the broadcast flag standard?

I use a lot of "homebrew" electronic equipment. My digital video recorder is a modified computer that I put together myself. I want to know that a broadcast flag will not render such set-ups obsolete. Hardware compatibility is of great importance to me. Already we generate too much computer waste with the speed at which electronic equipment becomes obsolete. I try to minimize this by reusing old equipment--rebuilt PCs, repaired VCRs, etc. If the broadcast flag interferes with older equipment, and, heaven forbid, makes it unusable, there will be a lot of useless waste produced. Furthermore, there are many people in low income brackets that are lucky to have a second hand television set and VCR and who will not be able to afford new electronics in the face of broadcast flags. What is to become of them? Many will already be facing the hefty price of upgrading a television set to something that can receive digital, or getting a converter. The forced move to digital television alone is already going to create an even larger gap between the "haves" and the "have nots" in this country. So the night shift worker who manages to make the upgrade with a digital converter won't have the chance to time-shift his/her Jay Leno because now the VCR is obsolete as well. We need to avoid this.

Would a broadcast flag requirement limit the development of future equipment providing consumers with new options?

I know that proponents of the broadcast flag have stated that it is not their intent to hinder the development of future technologies that increase consumer's options in the realm of digital content, but it is easy to "say" this and not mean it. Where is the protection for fledgling technology developers in light of the Digital Millenium Copyright act? That act

combined with the broadcast flag will hinder development from the garage-technology developers who push the edge of innovation. Who would want to put in the time, thought and effort to develop new options and technologies when the threat of a large media company bringing a DMCA looms like a thundercloud over them?

What will be the cost impact, if any, that a broadcast flag requirement would have on consumer electronics equipment?

Americans are already being forced to absorb the financial burden of going to digital television. No one in their right mind could believe that there will not also be a huge cost involved in new equipment to interface with the broadcast flags. For the many Americans who are working hard enough as it is--particularly in these difficult economic times--this is going to add even more financial burden. What good is will this broadcast flag do them?

Can it be assured that we are not going to further widen the gap that is the digital divide?

Other Comments:

I would like to make it clear that I see no benefit to the broadcast flag, save to make it easier for large media conglomerates to incriminate those who innovate. This broadcast flag is about control, and it's not control for American citizens, it is control for corporations. I believe it is a mistake to implement these flags unless it is absolutely certain that consumers will retain the same flexibility and use of equipment they have had under the current system. But of course, if this were the case, it would make the flag moot. Proponents are worried about the choices and abilities consumers and citizens have and are gaining. The broadcasts flags serve only to protect their interests and their strangle-hold on consumers. I for one am insulted that anyone would believe that so many Americans are so dishonest that we must all be forced to give up our ability to move, copy, transfer and use our personal media. These flags are a waste of time and money and I have yet to see any way in which American citizens will benefit from them. Please do not implement this system